



NAVAJO COUNTY ARIZONA

JUNE 3, 2013



NAVAJO COUNTY JUDGE HIGGINS RECEIVES NATIONAL PHILANTHROPIC AWARD



Annually, Santa Clara University chooses from thousands of the school's past graduates to bestow the Ignatian Award, which honors alumni who best live "the SCU ideals of competence, conscience, and compassion, and have been a credit to ... the University through outstanding achievement in their service to humanity."

One of two Ignatian Award recipients for 2013? Navajo County Superior Court Judge Robert Higgins, who for 18 years has been a caring, committed and active presence in Navajo County. For years a lawyer in the community, Higgins was appointed to the Superior Court bench in early 2012 by Gov. Jan Brewer, after the retirement of Judge Carolyn Holliday. He won election to a full-term in November of 2012.

During his years in private practice as a plaintiffs' lawyer, Higgins worked on a number of pro bono cases, including representing a Montessori school, a

camp for handicapped children and often working on behalf of the White Mountain Apache tribe. In 2006, Higgins founded the St. Anthony Catholic School in Show Low, serving for four years as the school's volunteer principal. Today, St. Anthony has more than 110 students from pre-K to 8th grade. Higgins continues to serve as President of the St. Anthony Board of Trustees and President of the White Mountain Tuition Support Foundation, which awards scholarships to St. Anthony students in need.

Higgins, a father of three, graduated from Santa Clara University as an undergrad in 1980 and from the law school in 1994.

"Bob has a keen legal mind. He was a great lawyer and he's has made a terrific judge," says Navajo County Attorney Brad Carlyon. "But what's much more impressive is the way he lives his life. Every resident of the White Mountains and the County has been blessed by Bob's commitment to our community.

When people need Bob Higgins, he's there – every single time."

To see the Ignatian Award video commemorating Judge Higgins' honor and his community service, visit this web link: <https://vimeo.com/user10725040>. Past recipients of the award include former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.

HERE COMES THE SUN

On May 28th, the Navajo County Board of Supervisors, Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick and a host of elected officials, together with private sector partners like APS and Solar City, cut the ribbon and officially opened the new Navajo County Solar Facility in Holbrook. These new solar panels will provide cost-effective energy for the County Complex while demonstrating forethought and vision on behalf of taxpayers countywide.

"The facility already has produced 500,000 kWh and we are excited to see what the summer months will produce," said Chairman Jonathan M. Nez. "Over the next 15 years, this solar array will provide sustainable energy at a fixed price that is below the current market average price, and we thank our friends at Solar City and APS for their help in saving taxpayers' money."

According to APS estimates, the new solar facility currently provides about 80% of the electricity needs for the Navajo County Complex and Jail. All the rate agreements and other particulars are in place for the next 15 years.



REFRIGERATOR DONATION TO HELP ALICE'S PLACE SHELTER

Theresa Warren, the executive director at Alice's Place, asked, and in just a few days, thanks to help from a host of Navajo County employees, she received – a used refrigerator to help her serve the residents of her non-profit emergency shelter in Winslow.

The donation began with an email from Warren on May 9th. As she explained her predicament, Alice Place's single fridge wasn't enough to serve her 10 residents. That morning, Warren's email caught the eye of Debra Chapman, the Board of Supervisors' senior secretary. By day's end, an inquiry with the County's Public Fiduciary, Sherry Reed, had turned up a used refrigerator, worth \$25, set to be auctioned in an upcoming public surplus sale. Instead, the appliance was donated to Alice's Place and delivered to the East Second Street shelter by Buildings and Grounds staffers.

"This may seem like a small gesture, but to me it demonstrates the caring nature of Navajo County," said Supervisor Jesse Thompson. "We may not have the resources of some of the state's bigger counties, but we do have big hearts. This was a combination of creative thinking and quick action to make a difference. That's our county at its best."

In a May 15th letter to Thompson, Warren wrote:

"We are so grateful to you and everyone involved in the donation of the refrigerator to our shelter. I sent out an email request and just a few short days later we have a refrigerator! What a testament to the dedication and compassion of our County."

COUNTY, ADOT PARTNERSHIP IMPROVES ROAD TO NAOMI HOUSE

A partnership between the Navajo County Public Works Department, the Office of County Supervisor Sylvia Allen and the Arizona Department of Transportation has made the valuable work being done at NAOMI House in Jackrabbit a little bit easier these days.

On May 7th, the state-owned frontage road that provides essential access to NAOMI House was resurfaced by County personnel using more than 200 tons of recycled asphalt millings provided by ADOT. The result? A pristine stretch of street surface that will be low maintenance through Jackrabbit's harsh winters – and make it easier for NAOMI House, a non-profit, to continue to provide shelter and emergency services for Native American children who have been physically or sexually abused.

"The County provided the equipment, the personnel and the technical expertise," said County Public Works Director and Assistant County Manager

Homero Vela. "But we couldn't have done it without ADOT providing the asphalt millings materials."

County Supervisor Sylvia Allen explained that the project was vital because the work done by NAOMI House is vital.

"This non-profit has done so much for so many young Native children who have suffered terrible abuse," said Supervisor Allen. "In turn, when they had a need, we needed to pull together the right people to make sure NAOMI could keep helping children. I'm proud that we got it done and that the road looks so great."

Founded in 1995 by Linda Russell Thompson, NAOMI House is a non-denominational Christian ministry that provides a safe and loving home to Native American children in need. For more information, visit the organization's web site at thenaomihouse.org.



COUNTY MAKES STRIDES AGAINST CHECK FRAUD

Navajo County continues to make great strides against bad checks. That's thanks to the work of one woman, an award-winning program and support from the Navajo County Attorneys Office.

Gail DeCross is the program director for Navajo County's Bad Check Program. It recently won a County Summit Award for its contribution to community and economic development. In its first year, the program collected \$200,000. To date, it has collected well over \$1 million. The program's goal is to obtain full restitution for the victim without adding to the financial burden of the criminal justice system.

"My job is to work with the people of Navajo County, both bad check writers and victims, giving them an opportunity to keep their situation from going to court," DeCross said. "However, if contact cannot be made or communication breaks down, then I do have the 'heavy hammer of the law' available to prepare a complaint

and proceed to court. There is also the opportunity in a few cases to sign a Restitution Payment Agreement, giving a specific case some additional time to work with the program."

Still, the fight continues as businesses in our county lose tens of thousands of dollars each year due to bad checks. As a result, all of us suffer as the businesses are forced to pass on the cost of bad checks in the form of higher prices. The Navajo County Attorney's office has some helpful guidelines on what to do when you receive a check. Among them:

- Require a valid Arizona driver's license.
- Ask for a work telephone number and address.
- Require a physical address when a check only contains a P.O. Box number.
- Write the check writer's Arizona driver's license number on the front of the check.

- Do not write identification information on the back of the check as the bank stamp may obscure the information. In the case of pre-printed license numbers on checks, be sure to compare the number with the actual driver's license of the check writer.
- Verify the photograph and physical description on the driver's license.
- They must match the person writing the check.
- Accept only checks written with today's date.
- Only accept checks for the amount of purchase.

For DeCross, this program means providing excellent customer service to residents of Navajo County. "I personally enjoy working with people and love my job," she said. "I have been able to help young mothers, individuals and families understand the best ways to handle checking accounts and work with others through some unfortunate situations."

Every county in Arizona has a Bad Check Program and issuing a bad check is a crime under Arizona law. If a person issues or passes a check with knowledge that he does not have sufficient funds in his account, he is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. No tax dollars are used to operate Navajo County's Bad Check Program. The program is entirely self-funded.

You can find additional tips and information by visiting:
<http://www.navajocountyaz.gov/attorney/badcheckprotect.aspx>



COUNTY SPONSORS EVENT TO FIGHT TEEN PREGNANCY



The month of April offered an amazing educational experience for teens in Navajo County. The students were treated to a maze event at Blue Ridge High School on April 18th and 19th.

Navajo County's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP) coordinated the maze, which is an engaging and highly interactive educational tool. It's designed to help teens better understand risk-taking behaviors and consequences, as well as helping them look to the future and consider options for higher education and career exploration.

Dozens of students participated in the 75-minute exercise, which included weaving their way through various rooms to hear presentations on healthy eating, internet safety, fitness, the law as it relates to juveniles, as well as prevention information on drugs, alcohol, tobacco, distracted driving, pregnancy and STI risks, and relationship violence. The students were divided into groups of 8-10 individuals and led by a high school student peer leader. They

had the opportunity to explore each room for approximately 6-7 minutes before moving to the next area. The students were able to interact with an expert in each room, get some "hands on" information, and enable them to ask questions in a more intimate setting.

Arizona's teen birth rate has seen significant decreases since 1998, and over the past three years teen pregnancy rates dropped to a historic low – from 6th in the nation to 12th, with a drop of almost 30 percent. The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program targets youth 12-18 years of age, parents or other interested adults. The goals of the program are to reduce the number of pregnancies to teenage girls age 15-19, reduce the number of repeat pregnancies to teenage girls age 15-19 and to reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases among teenagers age 15-19.

Several community members helped in setting up the maze and we'd like to thank the following folks for their participation:

- Firefighters from Pinetop Fire Department for helping to construct the Maze
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program Manager Rosalva Zimmerman for training student peer leaders
- Bob Schlesinger, Health District Training Officer, who helped to hang curtain "walls" for the Maze
- Health Educator Yolanda Bailon for decorating the STD room in the Maze
- Medical Examiner investigator Trent Clatterbuck for preparing his presentation
- Debe Campbell from the Navajo County Drug Project
- Indian Health Services Public Health nurses Justin Tafoya and Chelsea Kleinmeyer
- County Attorney's office staff Jason Moore and Jaquel Moody
- Russell Hall from Owens-Livingston Mortuary
- Health Educator Vicky Solomon
- Health Educator Hannah Kilber

Organizers said that student response to the maze was very favorable and school administrators were very pleased with the level of interest and excitement generated.

The Maze is under the direction of the Navajo County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program Manager Rosalva Zimmerman, who has designed and presented this event in the Heber-Overgaard School District and Winslow Unified School District in the past.

The TPPP hopes to present the Maze next in Holbrook in Spring 2014

NAVAJO COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL COMPLEX

100 East Code Talkers Drive, South Highway 77
P.O. Box 668 • Holbrook, AZ 86025

(928) 524-4000

Visit Us at: www.navajocountyaz.gov/